

Exploring the Possibilities of Omani Landscapes as Venues for International Fashion Events

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to analyse the potential of promoting international fashion events in Oman and to analyse how the use of Omani landscapes as venues can encourage international fashion events.

Design/methodology/approach: The study used a mixed-method approach to gather data. Interview with seven experts from the tourism and fashion background was conducted to get their views on the possibility of Oman's Natural Landscape as an International Fashion venue. Additionally, an online survey was used to collect the data from the youth aged between 18 and 41, to get their perspective. The participants were generally students and academics related to fashion education. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used in the study.

Findings: The overall results show that although Oman's unique landscape has the potential to host international fashion events, there is still a lack of knowledge on the economic significance of the fashion industry as a whole and international fashion events in particular. Additionally, it was found that there is a need for Government attention and planning to promote and develop interest in international fashion events.

Research limitations/implications: This study proved that Oman can expand its target market for tourism through hosting international fashion events. Oman is promoted as a niche destination rich in culture and landscape and fashion-induced tourism could be Oman's future trend.

Social Implications: This study brought out the anticipated challenges and opportunities to support planning and bidding for international fashion events, and with proper research and planning it could be overcome but also leave a mark in standards of tourism and fashion.

Originality / Value: Since this is a relatively new concept, this study would be the blueprint for different stakeholders who share an interest in showcasing the Sultanate as a fashion tourism destination.

Keywords: Omani Landscapes, Fashion Tourism, Event Management, International Fashion Events, Tourism in Oman.

Introduction

Fashion is a coexisting language that communicates cultural individuality, identity, regional accents, and universality. It portrays cultural sophistication, authenticity, and cultural tradition. The word 'fashion' is linked to design, clothing, and accessories. We, as humans, absorb and interpret these signals subconsciously; this is where the worlds of fashion and tourism gradually merge (Jansson and Power, 2010). Fashion and tourism are complicated and multi-dimensional phenomena that include many parts that may not all be positive. The fashion industry promotes urban development goals and continues to be an essential element for both local and international economic development. Tourism has always had an outsized influence on the fashion industry. The growth of this is the result of tourism. Fashion and tourism are two industries that embrace each other and produce 'fantasies' enabling people to fit into, despite how different they are. The logical development of this 'dream' is fashion tourism (Polhemus, 2005).

Fashion Tourism

Yari (2014) defined fashion tourism as an interaction between fashion businesses, tourism service providers, and host communities. Fashion weeks

are the starting point for many destination-marketing organizations. Fashion tourism is a business activity that allows people to experience and consume fashion ([Tovmasyan, 2017](#)). Fashion tourism is a niche market that mixes creative, cultural, and shopping tourism.

Fashion houses use tourist destinations as iconic shooting locations, show venues, and foundations for flagship stores. Fashion events often take place in cities recognized as ‘Cities of Fashion’. Fashion weeks are a strategy used to view fashion as a new anchor for the tourism industry and the general economy of the host destination. By consistently hosting fashion week events, the host community’s awareness of the destination’s fashion credentials is raised and tourists, amongst other fashion enthusiasts, are motivated to visit that particular location. Simultaneously, fashion designers creatively acquire inspiration and dedicate collections to certain geographical locations, while encouraging their fan base to visit those destinations in the future. The economic contribution of fashion events cannot be ignored by Governments. The globalization of fashion has led to the rise of new trends all over the world, which has boosted tourism in many destinations. Both tourism and fashion are ascending sectors, and when combined, they make up a thriving multi-billion-dollar industry.

Fashion tourism is classified into three categories: retail tourism, creative tourism, and cultural tourism. The meanings and explanations under fashion, demonstrate how it can moderate variables in the destination and travel purpose selection process ([Lewis et al., 2013](#)). In shopping tourism, luxurious fashion purchases made by fashion tourists outside their countries generate between 20% and 30% of the fashion industry’s revenue on the whole ([Ahmed et al., 2022](#)). This study is built around the creative side of fashion tourism. After integrating culture with ‘design creativity’, a form of ‘aesthetic economy’ was produced and transformed into ‘fashion tourism’. Creative fashion tourism allows destinations to go over and beyond by removing obstacles and limits that act as restraints. Morocco, for example, lacks the purchasing power needed for retail tourism but excels in marketing itself as the Arabian fantasy of the fashion world.

Many elements go into the design phases of a branded fashion destination. These elements include cultural strengths that integrate unique creativity and emphasize ‘qualia’ characteristics. These characteristics determine the mental sensations and distinguish experiences from other similar ones. For this reason, the success of a ‘place’ in the fashion tourism market is linked to ‘qualia’. In other words, perception is made up of attention, expectation, and memory, and is not a passive receptor of these signals. Event organizers that incorporate consumer ‘qualia’, and perception atmospherics often look into visual attractiveness. Visual attractiveness primarily triggered by visual stimuli produces powerful consumer desire. So, the new micro destinations create qualities that are associated with nostalgia, uniqueness, and environmental quality. They show intangible values and generate sensations and emotions that become perceptions linked to the place.

In many cases, this industry can influence tourists to make decisions, or fashion statements, towards various travel services and product selection. Events help construct the experiences for tourists and residents. Additionally, events offer job opportunities and generally improve local infrastructure. Fashion events have the uniqueness of bringing distinction and value to host cities. This translates into a competitive edge over competing destinations. Landscape plays a vital role in the fashion industry. The most popular tourist landscapes are main settings, particularly intermediate environments, where the human race is minimal and whose allure is based exactly on the conservation and preservation of traditional traits.

In the early 1930s, a French woman opened Casablanca’s Joste haute couture salon, promoting French fashion ideals like Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Dior, and Lucien Lelong to Morocco; In the 1970s, Tamy Tazi, a Moroccan woman – prominent fashion designer motivated by Yves Saint Laurent – modernized Moroccan clothing by incorporating European fashion aesthetics – indeed Yves Saint Laurent rose to fame for his apparent use of Morocco’s exotic colours and textures in his creations ([Jansen, 2015](#)). This shows how important landscapes were as a source of creativity and inspiration. Fashion, history, heritage, and landscapes are inextricably entwined. History, heritage, and landscapes stimulate the artists in terms of texture, detail, and colour to simple, basic fashion ideas.

[Long and Morpeth \(2016\)](#) mentioned that various tourist services and locations will be replaced with time. [Connell et al. \(2015\)](#) claimed that tourists are searching for unique locations to explore. This includes specific target groups, whose wants and needs are met through a form of tourism called ‘geo-tourism’. a multi-interest type of tourism that harnesses nature. [Pralong \(2006\)](#) confirmed that places and landscapes include interesting peculiarities of earth sciences in an entertaining way. In terms of demand, geo-tourism is a form based on

imagination and emotion that favours experience and sensations. It explains the natural environment by playing with its temporal and spatial dimensions and offers opportunities for economic development. Given the numerous and different geographical features Oman owns, each of them can deliver one kind of experience and provide chances to meet people and share cultures now more than ever.

Oman as a destination is rich in natural habitats and landscapes. From the islands and sugar dunes of Masirah and the rock gardens of Duqm to the caves of Qurraiyat and the valleys of Salalah. The geographical diversity of Oman provides unique experiences for all and that is why Oman is called the Hidden Jewel of Arabia. Sultanate of Oman is one of the few locations in the world that harmoniously combines old and modern. Here, individuals still wear the traditional dress called 'thoub' while making use of modern conveniences and sensibilities, allowing timeless traditions to permeate daily life. With a focus on safeguarding the nation's distinctive cultural character, Oman's growth has been relatively recent. As a result, Oman offers visitors, the ideal chance to immerse themselves in an ancient setting to learn about the true nature of Arabia. This provides numerous opportunities for destination events to be planned and promoted targeting new markets.

Oman reveals a nuanced tale of materials, rituals, textiles, fine art, and design. Thus, there is huge untapped market potential for Oman in the form of fashion events. Through these events, international and local fashion enthusiasts and stakeholders can access and take inspiration from its landscapes. For example, hosting an auction in Al Hamra's Al Hoota cave or a fashion show in Duqm's rock garden, while promoting geo-tourism can be profitable for Oman's economic development. Thus, though Oman has the potential to be the fashion world's next hot spot, amongst other issues, it hugely lacks creativity and the eye for opportunity. These events in term will influence development in terms of new infrastructure and increased tourism capacity.

Oman's 2040 Tourism Plan: The Missing Dynamics of Fashion Tourism and Events

Oman's 2040 Tourism Plan strategy is based on engaging its natural attributes and cultural heritage. The 2040 strategy will be implemented in three phases viz. Preparation (2016 to 2020), Growth (2021 to 2030), and Stability (2031 to 2040); in partnership with public and private entities, including ministries for Commerce and Industry, Supreme Planning Council, Royal Oman Police, and the national carrier, Oman Air, (Zawya, 2017). According to the plan, 14 tourism infrastructure clusters will be built across the country according to regional characteristics, including coastal areas, mountains, and valleys. Oman's renowned natural beauty, cultural heritage, and great hospitality have attracted tourists from all over the world for years.

Nevertheless, with a renewed focus on developing a sustainable non-oil economy, the Government has launched an ambitious strategy to transform Oman into a luxury travel, destination to attract international high-net-worth travellers. As an individual luxurious industry, fashion stands as the perfect area that should be explored within the Sultanate's 2040 strategy to promote the 'niche' image it aims to brand itself as. They will also promote a positive destination image and serve as a tool that renews existing features. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) will strive for originality, innovation, and creativity. Conversely, tourism and fashion have been identified as creative sectors most commonly employed by destinations to generate a shift in conventional cultural tourism, from tangible heritage to intangible experiences.

Problem Statement

Considering possible interest from DMOs, tourist boards, and other tourism policymakers, there is still a dearth of understanding of the link between tourism and fashion events in Oman. According to [Al Jabri and Al Balushi](#) (2022), Oman has numerous locations of such kind but does not hold significant international events. Because of this recognized gap, there is a need to analyse the instances of popular places hosting key fashion events, as well as their links with corresponding tourism destinations, particularly, the aspects of creativity and opportunity of both tourism destinations and major fashion events, locally, regionally, and internationally.

Research questions

1. What is the potential for promoting international fashion events in Oman?
2. How can the use of Omani landscapes as venues for international fashion events be encouraged?

Research Objectives

1. To analyse the potential of promoting international fashion events in Oman
2. To analyse how the use of Omani landscapes as venues can encourage international fashion events

Literature Review

Fashion Tourism and Economic Contribution

As per [Parcerisa](#) (2018), Fashion Week in New York contributed to around 900 million dollars each year for the city. Similarly, [Peroni](#) (2024) quoted that the city of Milan received approximately 80 million euros during the women's fashion week in September 2023. According to a report by Allied Market Research published in November 2023, the global fashion events market was projected to reach from the current 33.6 billion US dollars to 61.5 billion US dollars. Their forecast is a CAGR of 5.3%. Another report by Customer Market Insights again published in November 2023 predicted the fashion event market to grow from 93.3 billion US dollars to 205.9 billion dollars. This means they predicted a CAGR of 9.2%. In the Middle East, the fashion industry is anticipated to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of roughly 7% between 2023 and 2027 ([Maki and Schneider](#), 2023). [Gravari-Barbas & Sabatini](#) (2023) noticed that in 2020, the interdependence of the two industries fashion and tourism was obvious when tourism was frozen due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fashion Cities

[Lazzeretti et al.](#) (2017) defined a fashion city as a type of creative city characterized by an elevated concentration of creative industries, a large number of creators, both public and private cultural institutions, and a fashion group that can attract tourists. [Capone and Lazzeretti](#) (2016) described 'fashion cities' as cities characterized by a wide range of commercial, financial, cultural, entertainment, and leisure activities that are known internationally for having powerful and unique identities. Fashion cities such as Milan, London, and Paris, have been widely recognized for their thriving fashion industries and have carved strong positions as international fashion capitals of the world recently, non-traditional fashion cities such as Beirut, Amsterdam, and Lyon have also focused on fashion-induced tourism ([Bada](#), 2013). [Ledezma \(2017\)](#) explained that, as a result of tourism, the fashion enterprise has spread out to a range of recent influences.

Fashion Events

Fashion events are a catalyst in attracting tourists to specific destinations. They offer the possibility to experience the destination extraordinarily. Of late, many tourist destinations are including exclusive events in their travel packages, seeing this as an opportunity to lure more tourists in the off-season ([Connell et al.](#), 2015). However, [Liberato et al.](#) (2021) claimed that events under fashion tourism are not adequately valued by the tourism industry.

Fashion Event Trends

In 2020, Jacquemus, a French fashion designer chose lavender fields at Valensole as the venue for his spring/summer fashion show, as his collection resembled artworks by Hockney, Paul Cézanne, and Jean Lurçat; he explained that 'with backdrop, many would only remember the lavender, while others will notice the runway's similarity with the Hockney painting' which was the starting point of the drop ([Hobbs](#), 2019). Le Coup de Soleil, or The Sun Burn, used saturated colour palettes while encapsulating the glow of the attendees after a spectacular day spent in the fields. Similarly, in 2021, luxury fashion house Burberry held a runway show for its spring collection in a disclosed natural landscape, which was held in the woods outside the city of London ([Petrarca](#), 2020). Later that year, the September runway show was held outdoors which emphasized the need to recognize the world changing by adapting and redefining landscapes through new ways of expression ([Hanbury](#), 2020).

For destinations to develop their economies and allow their cultures to flourish, tourism operators should consider applying real 'experiences' to the main dimensions of tourism – products, people, and places ([Lin](#), 2011). [Block](#) (1987) defined qualia as the experiential properties of sensations, feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and desires. [Schacter et al.](#) (2011) claimed that to understand the external environment, focusing on perception by organizing, identifying, and interpreting sensory information is a must. [Shalom et al.](#) (2009) stated that perception involves nervous signals that are a result of physical or, and chemical stimulation of the sensory organs. Attractiveness creates emotions that draw consumers to objects and processes of events ([Huang et al.](#), 2016).

Global Landscapes Influence on Fashion Events

Clothing brands are easily linked with specific countries and cities, and the clothing value chain is globalized in a way that has attracted much engagement from social scientists ([Godart](#), 2014). [Font and Vela](#) (2009) explained that the intermediate landscape changes in function, morphology, and character, and as a result of the use for leisure and tourism, micro-destinations have emerged. [Terkenli \(2000\)](#) stated that these micro landscapes, which are mostly rural, have a double quality: They are the home and workplace of locals whilst

being a place of leisure and pleasure for tourists. Therefore, the promotion of a ‘micro’ landscape as a new market has a significance and a positive impact on the quality of life of its population, which also reflects onto the image projected by the main destination.

In 2007, Pierre Cardin held a runway show in the Chinese city of Dunhuang, the landscape located at the edge of the Gobi Desert as the designer was influenced by the simplicity of its aesthetic. Gobi Desert has become a popular tourist destination after that (Bannerman, 2022). Similarly, Egyptian authorities have begun to position Egypt as a venue for major international fashion brand shows through a variety of tourist attractions – Egypt’s temples, pyramids, and archaeological sites drawing global attention (Espanol, 2022). Al Ula is one of the most used landscapes in Saudi Arabia which hosted two of the biggest fashion shows from Christian Dior and Dolce & Gabbana; Dior celebrated the release of the fragrance Sauvage at the UNESCO World Heritage site – Elephant Rock (Joseph, 2021), and Dolce & Gabbana was invited from Italy by the Royal Commission to participate in the Tantora Festival to host their couture show named Ikamah Fashion show (Maisey, 2022).

Because fashion events and tourism are relatively small markets in the Sultanate, this study requires much of the information from the stakeholders directly.

Research Methodology

The approach used to obtain data in this study is a mix between qualitative and quantitative. According to Brunt et al. (2017), qualitative study approaches, like interviews, allow studies to dive deeply into the subject explored and modify questions to respondents accordingly. Interview with 7 experts from the tourism and fashion background (including fashion scholars, fashion designers, fashion-house owners, event organizers, photographers, and individuals from the Government sector) was conducted to get their views on the possibility of Oman’s natural landscape as an international fashion venue. Quantitative approaches, like online surveys, allow studies to spend less time and effort discussing findings since statistical data are used for the study descriptions and analysis (Connolly, 2007). Combining these methods supported the study with generalizable data that is comprehensive and contextualized. So, the online survey was conducted and the data was collected from 40 students from both fashion and tourism studies. According to Finn et al. (2000), non-probability sampling is not random does not provide every member of the population an equal chance of being chosen, and is frequently applied when conducting interviews at the source of the problem. So, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to gain rich data to support the study.

Some of the questions in the questionnaire were of Likert-scale type with values defined as follows: 1.00 – 1.79 – Very low; 1.80 – 2.50 – Low; 2.60 – 3.30 – Moderate; 3.40 – 4.19 – High; 4.20 – 5.00 – Very high. Besides open-ended questions also were there. In some of the questions the 5-point Likert scale was used with values: SA for Strongly Agree; A for Agree; N for Neutral; D for Disagree and SD for Strongly Disagree. Weighted average mean (WAM) was calculated to obtain the ranking and to give an overall view of the respondents.

Findings

Table. 1 Demographics of the respondents

	Age	18-25	26-33	34-41	Total
Gender	Non-Omani	-	10%	-	10%
	Female	-	5%	-	5%
	Male	-	5%	-	5%
	Omani	55%	30%	5%	90%
	Female	35%	5%	0%	40%
	Male	20%	25%	5%	50%
	Total	55%	40%	5%	100%

Table 1 illustrates the demographics of the respondents. 45% of the respondents were females while 55% of them were males. 35% of females were Omanis aged between 18-25. An equal percentage of 5% of Omani and non-Omani females were aged between 25-33. 20% of the Omani male participants were aged between 18-25. 25% of them were aged between 26-33, and 5% of them were aged between 34-41. The remaining 5% were non-Omani males aged between 26-33.

Table. 2 Attending/Organising Fashion Events in Natural Settings

Attended fashion event/event using natural landscape	Organized		
	No	Yes	Total
No	60%	0%	60%
Yes	35%	5%	40%
Total	95%	5%	100%

From Table 2, it is clear that 60% of them had never attended or organized a fashion event. Out of rest 40% of respondents who had attended/organized a fashion event, only 5% had attended and organized a fashion event in a natural landscape. The majority of the 95% of respondents that they had either organized or attended a fashion event in a natural landscape/setting.

From the responses, it was confirmed that most of the events attended were charity fashion events, whereas the other events were designer-run shows and marketing campaigns. The respondents also revealed that the charity fashion events took place in the Al Dakhiliya region, the other one took part in a local food festival twice – one time in a natural park and the other one on the beach. All of these places were within Oman. The respondents confirmed that using natural landscapes for luxury fashion brand events was successful, all of them (100%) agreed ‘yes’.

Table. 3 Landscapes suited for Luxury Fashion Events

Natural landscapes of Oman suited for fashion events	%	Rank
Deserts	55.0	1 st
Caves	50.0	2 nd
Mountains	47.5	3 rd
Beaches	45.0	4 th
Wadis	35.0	5 th
Rock Gardens	30.0	6 th

Table 3 shows that Deserts were the first option of the respondents with rock gardens as the lowest ranking.

Table. 4 General Perceptions on the Oman’s Fashion Industry

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM
Fashion is a reliable industry to be associated with	27.5%	52.5%	17.5%	2.5%	0%	4.05
Regular jobs, unlike jobs in fashion, are easier to acquire and maintain	10.0%	47.5%	27.5%	15.0%	0%	3.53
The financial awareness of fashion is low	30.0%	47.5%	15.0%	5.0%	2.5%	3.98
There is a lack of investors and other financial support in fashion	30.0%	55.0%	10.0%	5.0%	0%	4.10

Table 4 illustrates tangibles that fall under the general perception of the fashion industry in Oman. All the statements met with high agreement. However, the perception that there was a lack of financial awareness and a lack of investors was observed.

Table. 5 Perception of the relationship between Fashion and Omani Society

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM
Fashion risks local social norms	10.0%	35.0%	25.0%	27.5%	2.5%	3.23
Due to social pressure individuals do not apply for jobs in the fashion industry	20.0%	55.0%	15.0%	7.5%	2.5%	3.83
Lack of exposure to international luxury fashion standards in Oman	45.0%	37.5%	15.0%	2.5%	0%	4.25
Lack of study/academic resources related to fashion in Oman	27.5%	45.0%	22.5%	2.5%	2.5%	3.93
Fashion does not mean anything in Oman	5.0%	42.5%	35.0%	15.0%	2.5%	3.33
Religion is perceived as a fashion barrier in Oman	15.0%	42.5%	22.5%	12.5%	7.5%	3.45
Lack of fashion awareness, potential, and information in Oman	15.0%	70.0%	7.5%	7.5%	0%	3.93

Table 5 shows the perceptions that fall under social setup and norms. Being a Middle Eastern country with a rich heritage it can be understood that religion, fashion risks to social norms, and social pressures are all part of the impediments that prevent the promotion of fashion as per the perceptions of the respondents. Also, lack of awareness, limited resources, and lack of exposure are all prevalent as per the respondents who are currently part of fashion education.

Table. 6 Perception of Omans's landscape as a venue for fashion events

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM
The weather in Oman is a disadvantage	10%	25%	30.0%	25.0%	10%	3
In certain seasons (e.g. winter and spring), the weather in Oman allows for outdoor fashion events	45%	40%	12.5%	2.5%	0%	4.28

Table 6 shows the respondents' perceptions of the environment, specifically the weather. The respondents strongly agree that 'In certain seasons the weather in Oman allows for outdoor fashion events' as it scores a mean of 4.28.

Table. 7 Opinion on Omans's Potential as a hub for Fashion Events

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	WAM
Creating a market for luxury fashion events using natural landscapes is difficult in Oman	7.5%	35.0%	17.5%	30.0%	10%	3.0
Many fashion events (other than runway shows) could be held in Oman	37.5%	52.5%	10.0%	0%	0%	4.28

Oman's exclusivity and security allow private fashion events like auctions and brand campaigns	35.0%	45%	20.0%	0%	0%	4.15
Oman has the potential to be the next fashion hotspot	32.5%	35%	30.0%	2.5%	0%	3.98

Overall, the respondents strongly agreed that many fashion events could be held in Oman. This was significant because the mean scored 4.28. Moreover, they also agreed that Oman's exclusivity and security allow private events like auctions and brand campaigns with a mean value of 4.15. The statements – hosting luxury events and becoming a fashion hot spot also received a high mean score. The statement Creating a market for luxury events using natural landscapes had a moderate mean score.

A correlation test was also conducted to check whether there could be a correlation between social setup and norms (restricting factors) and Oman as a potential fashion hot spot.

H0: There is no correlation between Omani Society's perceptions and Oman as a potential fashion hot spot (Null Hypothesis)

H1: There is a correlation between Restricting Factors (Social Pressures) and Oman as a potential fashion hot spot (Alternative hypothesis)

Table. 8 (a), (b), & (c) Regression Statistics

Summary

Multiple R	0.1442
R Square	0.0208
Adj. R Square	-0.005
Std. Error	0.8641
Observations	40

ANOVA

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Regression	1	0.603	0.6027	0.8072	0.37
Residual	38	28.372	0.7466		
Total	39	28.975			

Coefficients

	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>Std Error</i>	<i>t-Stat</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>
Intercept	2.9938	1.1006	2.7202	0.01	0.7658	5.2218
Omanis society	0.2649	0.2949	0.8985	0.38	-0.3320	0.8619

From Table 8, it was observed that the value between the variables is 0.14, which shows a weak positive correlation. R square shows 0.02. This means that the influence exerted by the restricting factor was low (2%). Since the p-value (0.38) is greater than 5%, there is a relationship between the variables. Hence, the alternative hypothesis cannot be rejected. i.e., though the correlation is weak and it cannot be ignored. In other words, a larger sample size would be required to decide conclusively.

Interview Results

The interviewees were questioned about whether they attended or organized a fashion event for which most of them that they had attended runway shows, and very few responded that they attended fashion campaigns and collections. They also responded that Oman needed the presence of luxury brands in general.

Table. 9 Summary of the Interviews and Responses

Questions	Responses
1. How do events in natural landscapes influence the overall brand image and consumer perception of a fashion house?	The presence of fashion houses in natural landscapes intrigues consumers, gives them new experiences, and motivates them to appreciate natural environments more. Brands could be surprised at the gravitation of consumers toward experiencing an event that portrays art and fashion in unusual settings. Brands that host events in natural landscapes unconsciously advocate for environmental awareness and preservation. As such events are 'unusual' to today's consumers, this causes them to believe that these houses offer them 'refreshing' experiences. Hence, a respect for natural environments and fashion houses grows.
2. What makes fashion events in natural landscapes unique compared to events held in traditional venues?	The events held in natural landscapes are known to allow a small capacity of people. This creates a sense of intimacy and oneness with nature. 'Nature leaves memory' and the outdoors stimulates human senses, which results in them leaving the event with long-term memories.
3. How can fashion brands collaborate with local communities to create mutually beneficial partnerships?	Although luxury fashion events are meant for a certain market segment, locals can be given opportunities too. By hosting events in areas near local villages, fashion houses expose new opportunities to locals that could elevate them. In other words, international brands could exchange long-term exposure, opportunity, and experience with locals for the temporal use of their landscapes.
4. What are the challenges and opportunities of fashion events in natural landscapes?	- see Table. 10 -
5. How will fashion tourism evolve in the coming years, and what impact will it have on the industry as a whole?	There does not seem to be any evolution whereas some opined that they can see some changes in art and culture and hence fashion will follow all along soon. They all agreed that Oman has a long way to go. The tourism industry still lacks basic facilities, let alone follows international standards. Oman to make a statement, it needs awareness. Omanis need to recognize the importance of fashion to its people and place – Omanis need to focus. understand and recognize the importance and acquiring knowledge. Knowledge leads to creativity which paves ways to develop skills that aid in portraying their potential better. In the coming years, fashion tourism will shed light on acknowledging, appreciating, and developing the industry.

Source: Interview responses

Table. 10 Challenges and opportunities of fashion events in natural landscapes

	Challenges	Opportunities
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservative mentality that believes that anything performed out of the box is an attempt to lose the Omani identity. - Creating a spending culture for fashion. - Brands need to cater to religious views that are acceptable in Oman. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Society can be worked around easily. - The lack of jobs in Oman causes society to investigate other sectors, including fashion. - Fashion shows locals, the value of their culture and destination. - Modest fashion is an ongoing trend in luxury fashion. Brands will be accepted in Oman.
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrictions that fall under environmental guidelines. - The logistics of events are environmentally harmful. - Natural landscapes are sensitive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows us to find safer forms of energy to power events. - The environmental diversity of Oman allows for events to be held throughout the year and minimizes over-tourism.
Economical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lack of investment opportunities for locals and foreigners. - The lack of fashion-related initiatives. - Fear of investing in fashion stems from the lack of awareness. - Unclear investment rules and regulations. - Obtaining permits for events. - Unclear laws and regulations. - Following up with entities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a slight increase in the economic state of many industries other than oil and gas. - Oman is working toward financial freedom and industrial awareness of sectors. - Fashion has the potential to create jobs, which always results in a positive economic cycle. - Entities are now more open to events and allow individuals and companies to obtain permits faster and easier. - Entities now provide financial support to sectors that have the potential of flawlessly executing projects.

Discussion

From the above findings, it was clear that it was not difficult to create a market for luxury fashion events using the natural landscapes of Oman. The respondents confirmed that many fashion events (other than runway shows) can be held in Oman. They also agreed that Oman's exclusivity and security allow private fashion events like auctions and brand campaigns which means it would attract niche tourists. They also seem to agree that events can be held only at certain times of the year due to the weather conditions. Further, it was confirmed that the luxury brands offer a great opportunity for Oman to venture into this industry. As per the current industry players and future stakeholders (students), there is huge potential in international fashion events especially if it is held in Oman's natural landscape as it would help to capture the attention of the niche market on its natural beauty and cultural heritage which is in line with its 2040 vision.

The challenges that were brought up by the people from within the industry were society's conservative mentality and the low-spending nature of fashion. They felt that the main impediments from the Government were a lack of investment opportunities, a lack of fashion-related initiatives, unclear investment rules and regulations, environmental restrictions, and complicated procedures for obtaining permits for events. The industry experts added that with economic diversification, the fashion industry can offer economic benefits.

They also pointed out that if the Government provided new opportunities, more entities would be willing to invest in this industry. Interestingly they confirmed that modest fashion was more accepted and trending Omani society could now be more open to it.

Suggestions

Oman has wonderful natural resources in the form of landscapes that vary from pristine, and magnificent to picture-perfect. Holding international fashion events would help rein in the economic benefits from these resources without damaging them because such events are for a small number of people who are part of niche tourism. But to do so there is a lot to be done. It should look beyond posting pictures on social platforms for engagement and create tangible experiences.

The following suggestions are made:

1. Awareness should be created among stakeholders in the fashion and tourism industries through educational programs and training activities.
2. To create awareness, research needs to be done on consumer behaviour and market trends, therefore closing the knowledge gap.
3. Partnerships and collaborations should be encouraged among fashion businesses, tourism organizations, and cultural institutions to create one of its kind fashion experiences.
4. The authorities would do well to incorporate fashion into the 2040 Development Plan by harmonizing goals and including fashion-related initiatives, projects, and infrastructure. Here again, a study needs to be done in this area to maintain a fine balance between international and local aesthetics to prevent conflict or loss of ethnic identity.
5. The authorities should also work on creating a user-friendly and single window for new investors.
6. There needs to be proper planning and coordination between the stakeholders to explore Oman's landscapes for fashion events within the sustainable development goals.

Finally, Oman has its strong roots in its cultural heritage and history and the people of Oman believe that it can influence the global fashion industry. Oman has historically made its presence and proved its power and potential to the world. Now is the time to redesign history.

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